

Chapman Mayoꝝ, &c.

*Cur. Special. tent. die Dominica
xxi. die October 1688. Anno-
que Regis Jacobi Secundi
Angl. &c. quarto.*

THis Court doth desire
Mr. Resbury to Print his
Sermon Preached this Morning
in the *Guildhall* Chappel, before
the Lord Mayor and Aldermen
of this City.

Wagstaffe.

I M P R I M A T U R

*Octob. 22.
1688.*

*Z. Iſham R. P. D. Hen.
Episc. Lond. à Sacris.*

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A
SERMON

Preach'd before the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
Lord Mayor,
AND
Court of Aldermen,
IN
GUILD-HALL CHAPPEL.

On *Sunday* the xxi. of *October*. 1688.

By *NATHANAEL RESBURY*, Chaplain
to the Right Honourable *James* Earl of *Anglesey*.

LONDON,

Printed for *W. Kettilby* at the Bishops-Head in
St. Paul's Church-yard. 1689.

THE [illegible] [illegible]

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CHURCH-HALL [illegible]

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sir **John Chapman**

Lord Mayor of the City of *London,*

And to the

Court of Aldermen.

My Lord,

I *Make bold to Present your
Lordship and the Court of
Aldermen, with a very plain
Discourse, which should not have
adventur'd this review, but inentire
Obedience to your Lordship's and
the Court's Commands for Publishing
it. I confess it is a Noble Subject, and
worthy every Man's Nicest Observation
and Wisest thoughts. And your Lord-
ship, with the whole Body of this Great
City,*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

City. have become a fresh Instance in the Argument, in the late Effects of His Majesty's good will toward you, and your re-instatement into your Antient Priviledges and Immunities. So that, (since you have thought fit so to order it) be pleas'd to accept this as an humble Congratulation.

May your Lordship, with the whole Body under your Government, prove happy Instruments in the Ministries of Providence, to promote and further that most Holy Religion in the Life and Practice, the Profession and Enjoyment of which, it hath hitherto pleas'd the Divine Hand, to assert and vindicate against all open or Clandestine Attempts. It is the earnest Prayer of

Your Lordship's

Most Devoted, most Humble,
and most Obedient Servant.

N. Resbury.

A
SERMON

Preach'd before the
Lord Mayor.

Matth. VI. 26.

*Behold the Fowles of the air, they sow not,
neither do they reap, nor gather into
Barns; yet your Heavenly Father
feedeth them; are not ye much better
than they?*

THese Words are part of that Col-
lection of discourses, with which
our Saviour entertain'd his Disci-
ples in the Mount: wherein, after having
B laid

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laid down many and most excellent Instructions about a good life: about the nature and manner of performing that great Duty of Prayer, &c. He enters upon that most encouraging subject of Divine Providence, and the immediate Care that God hath over them, sufficient to quiet and lay asleep all those Fears and Presages they might have, about the great Straits and Difficulties of Life they might expect to be reduc'd to, through the Rage and Spight of their Enemies, inflam'd and embitter'd against them, upon the account of that *New Religion* they were then to advance in the World.

Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor yet for your Body what you shall put on; Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the Fowles of the air, &c.

In the words we have these three Observables.

1. The Concern that Divine Providence hath in the smallest Contingencies in this World. The very *Fowles of the air* are fed by

by his hand. *Behold the Fowles of the air, &c.*

2. Much more the concern it hath in all Humane Affairs. *Are ye not much better than they?*

3. Most of all in the Well-being of his Church: This I observe, by considering those to whom our Saviour directs his discourse, not only *as men*, but as *his Followers*; and those whom he design'd to adopt and constitute as *his Church*. Of these as briefly as may be; in their Order.

1. Consider we that Concern that Divine Providence hath in the smallest Contingencies in this World. *Behold the Fowles of the air, &c.* Our Saviour is preaching to them upon the Mount, and in the open air; and therefore probably took the occasion from things that were in their present view to treat his Audience, that by such familiar instances he might render himself more useful, and his discourses more impressive upon them. Thus, in this place, he observes from the flight of the *Birds* over them, the influence that Providence hath in feeding them; and a little afterward, from the prospect of the Fields and
B 2. Meadows

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Meadows below them, he exemplifies upon the same argument; and from the verdure and beauty of the Fields and Lillies which the Divine Hand cloaths and adorns, he gives them encouragement to expect cloathing from God, *v. 28. 29. Consider the Lillies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his Glory was not array'd like one of these: wherefore, if God so cloath the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the Oven; shall he not much more cloath you, O ye of little Faith?*

Here I might undertake the proof of Divine Providence, against the *Epicureans* of old, and the *Infidels* of this present Age; but I shall rather chuse to suppose the thing, and spend that time I have in illustrating the Argument, believing that some useful Meditations upon so comfortable a Subject, may (in this place where Providence is (I hope) Universally believ'd, and perpetually experimented) be more proper and seasonable.

And

And thus we may observe, throughout the whole Scriptures, *this* ascrib'd to Divine Providence, as feeding and supporting the meanest of Creatures, that *his tender mercies are over all his works*, Ps. 145. 9. that *he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing*, v. 16. that *he giveth to the Beast his food, and to the young Ravens that cry*, Ps. 147. 9. That the Snow, the Frost, the Winds, and the Waters are gender'd, do melt or flow, according to the directions of his Word, *ibid.* v. 16, 17, 18. Nay, our Saviour adds, that *tho' two Sparrows are sold in the Market for one Farthing, yet not one of them falls to the ground without the appointment of Providence*; and from thence argues the encouragement his Followers might have against all needles and unreasonable fears, Mat. 10. 29, 30. And indeed, this, the Immensity of that Being, to whom we ascribe so Universal a Providence, secures us effectually in. So immense and boundless is his Nature, that he fills all places at the same instant, and beholds all things (as the Schoolmen express it well enough) *uno actu*

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& *intuitu*, with one act of his Almighty Eye. So that as he had the Ideas of all things to which he design'd to give a Being, in his own great and comprehensive mind, a long Eternity before he suffer'd them to be produc'd; and this without any travel or burden upon his thoughts; so does he still observe all Things, and interpose in all Events, without any encumbrance of Business upon himself, because he is every where, and sees every thing, not successively, or one space of time after another, as we are fain to do, but at the same instant moment continually. And well it is for the World indeed, that it hath this Immense and Boundless Nature to depend upon, that *this* should have its influence upon the least and meanest of things, in the government and disposure of all their Natural Motions, for otherwise the very *Species* of things could not be long preserv'd. Such are the Natural Antipathies that some things have against one the other; such the Natural Tendencies in other things to consume and destroy themselves, that, unless Providence should have its perpetual

petual Influence, in directing a Subserviency of one thing to another, in over-ruling Sympathies and Antipathies, in Ministering fresh Supplies for prevention of Decays, Nature might quickly spend it self off, and the whole World soon run into that Confusion and Jumble, which some have fanci'd was its first and antient Original. There are not the smallest and minuteſt Causes of Things, but they have that interest in the great Chain and dependence of the whole, that were not these smallest things within the Concern and Management of Providence, the whole could not subsist. Hence *Plato*, upon this Argument, demonstrates, by the Examples of a Physician and a Mariner, how necessary it is for the Preservation of the whole, that there should be a wise and universal Inspection into the smallest parts. Thus the Physician, did he not observe and obviate the disorders in the Blood, or the least peccancy of Humour that disturbs and diseaseth his Patient, he might discourse never so Learnedly of the Nature of Diseases, of the Composure of the Body, and the Propriety

priety of this or that Medicament, and yet the Sick Man falls under the burden of his Distemper into the Grave. So again, should not the Mariner make it his care, that every the least part of his Ship might be secur'd from leakage or foundring, he might run over all the Points of his Compass with a great deal of accuracy, he might tell of the position of such or such a Rock or Quick-sand never so punctually, and in all other things foresee and provide against a Storm never so dextrously, and yet sink in a fatal wreck thro' the craziness of any one part: From whence (saith that Excellent *Philosopher*) it is unworthy of God to think, that he, who thro' an Infinite Understanding can take care of all things, should not by a wise inspection into smaller things, direct the Influence they have, for the preservation of the whole.

2. Come we to consider; That if Divine Providence concerns it self in the smallest Contingencies in this World; how much more doth it in all Humane Affairs? *Are not ye much better than they?* And so we find the nature

nature of the Argument is that which we call a *minori ad majus*. If concern'd in the less, much more in the greater. Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Rayment? i. e. If Providence hath concern'd it self to give you a Life, can he not with more Ease and Likelihood give you Food? If he have Fram'd so goodly a Structure as the Body, can he not provide Clothing too? In pursuance of this, we may observe, First, how it pleases God to represent himself, as shewing his regards to the Poorest and Meanest Station of Mankind, that hath been ever yet Created; Much more then, Secondly, may we suppose him, superintending the Affairs of whole Nations and Communities of Men, and those whom he hath Ordain'd as his Vicegerents therein.

1. He hath shewn his Regards to the very poorest and lowest Degree of Humane Nature; this we may observe in the Judicial Laws of his own framing amongst the Jews; he hath provided that the Gleanings of every Years Harvest and Vintage, should be of that Competency, as to be

C

come

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come a sufficient support to them, *Levit. 19. 9, 10.* where we find, at the end of that Law, this Sanction particularly, *I am the Lord your God, i.e.* I am both their and your Lord God; who own them as well as you under my Care and Government. I might instance further in that Law of *the Sabbatical Year*, wherein Provision was made, that the Land should have no Tillage, but of its voluntary Fruits, (which in Oliveyards and Vineyards might be very considerable) and of the shedded Seeds of Corn, (which in those Countries might without Labour come to an easy Maturity) abundant Provision might arise to the Poor who were in common to Enjoy it, *Levit. 23. 10, 11.*

And as he takes care for their Maintenance, so for their Defence too; in those severe Laws against their Oppression, either in withholding their Wages, or rigidly exacting too great a Pledge in their Necessity of Borrowing; or giving a just Cause against them to a Wealthy or Powerful Adversary; but I must not be too large here: However, I cannot but add under this

this Head, that in the first Revelations of the Gospel, the Blessed Founder of Christianity it self, put himself into that Rank and Station; chose out his Apostles from among Poor Fishermen; made the Lame and Blind (and those too Begging by the High-Way side) the main Subjects of his Divine Miracles. Nay, this he made the Character of himself as the true Messiah, to those who were sent to enquire concerning him from *John Baptist, the Blind receive their sight, &c. and to the Poor the Gospel is Preached, Mat. 11. 5.* In a word, 'tis the Poor to whom our Kindness or Churchness in this World, will be made the great Standard of Judgment, in that Awful Day of our General Appearance at the Bar of God, *Mat. 25. 45. Insomuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.*

2. If he hath shewn his Regards to the Poorest and Lowest Degrees of Humane Nature, much more then to whole Nations and Communities of Men, to overrule all the Passions, Affections, the Love, the Hatred, the Ambition, the Cou-

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rage, the Power, the Designs, and the Interests of Mankind, upon which the Hinge of all Humane Affairs do turn; so that *this* Community of People should be Preserv'd and Flourish, the *other* should Decay and Dwindle, Perish, and be Overturn'd according to the Pleasure of his Will. He hath the very Hearts of Kings, his Immediate Vice-Gerents, in his hands, *to turn them as the Rivers of Waters, which way himself pleaseth.* He raiseth some up for the Defence and Protection of his Truth and Interests in the World, and others, to shew his *own power upon them*, in the violent Effects of *their* Obstinacy and Perverseness, and his Vengeance; as he is pleas'd himself to tell us in that Instance of *Pharaoh*, *Exod. 9. 16.* This is very evident in all those Revelations of himself, which he made to his *Prophets*, pointing out so long beforehand, the Raising and Establishing *such* Kings and Kingdoms, Enlarging and Amplifying *such* Thrones and Empires, pulling down and Abolishing *others*; the Histories of which when we Read and Consult, if we look indeed

no higher, we may observe the various workings of Mens Passions; the Courage of some, and the Cowardise of others; the strange Vicissitudes of Fortunes in all: the wondrous mutability of Humane Affairs, the uncertain Condition of the Highest, and of the Lowest too. But then, look we into the Books of the Prophets, and there we find the immediate interest that Providence hath in all; four hundred years before pointing out a spot of ground wherein the *Israelites* should be fixt, and what kind of Nations should be rooted out to give them room; calling the very Person by name, whom he design'd to make a Great and Illustrious Emperour, two hundred years before that Person had any Being.

Thus we find in *Isaiah*, who flourish'd 200 years before *Cyrus* was born, that faith of *Cyrus* he is my Shepherd, *Isa. 44. 28.* And this he challengeth to himself; beyond the preiences of all other Gods. Who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time, have not I the Lord? *Isa. 45. 21.*

And

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And tho' in these later Ages of the World, we have perhaps no Prophets, nor Sons of Prophets, amongst us; yet have we one standing Book of *Revelations*, wherein the Fate and Revolution of the Church, and of the World, is unalterably determin'd and describ'd; where the Vicissitudes of our own Age may be read in the Event, tho' perhaps not so well understood before-hand in the Prediction it self. Where the Apostacy, the Idolatry, the Ambition, the external Splendor, and the Bloody Tyranny of the Church of *Rome*, is no doubt one great Subject of that Mystick Volume; which how dark and obscure soever it hath formerly seem'd, and may yet seem, as to things that are not yet come to pass; yet the Events of Things give light into the *Prophecy*, wherein they are concern'd, and assure us what an hand and direction Divine Providence hath had in all, and confirming to us that mighty foundation of Hope; that, as it hath pleas'd God, according to his Predictions of old, to throw his Church into a warm Furnace of Affliction for some Ages, yet that she shall
come

come out like try'd Gold, and Triumph in all her determin'd Glory, over all her Bloody and Insatiable Enemies. And this leads me to my Third and last Head, which I shall briefly Consider.

3. That Divine Providence is most assuredly concern'd in the Well-being of his Church. This I observe, by considering those to whom our Saviour directs his Discourse; not meerly as *Men* in General, but as his *Followers*, and those whom he design'd to Adopt and Constitute as his Church. Indeed, his whole management of this World, his turning and overturning, his raising up some, and putting others down, is all with peculiar respect to that part of Mankind, which he calls his Church. It is for her chastisement and correction, for her prospering and encouragement, for her amendment and reformation, for her encrease and accomplishment, that all the great Affairs and Revolutions of this World, are directed by God. The Church is his immediate Care in all the applications of Providence in his Government of the World. This may appear,

1. From

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1. From that endearing relation he hath pleas'd to own and challenge to himself with this part of Mankind. He calls them sometimes *his Children*, sometimes *his Peculiar People*, sometimes *his Inheritance*, sometimes *his Spouse*; nay, and sometimes the *very Apple of his Eye*: all which must give them undeniable assurance, that God leaves not such, so nearly interested with him, to the wide World, to blind Chance, or to fortuitous surprizals of calamity and trouble befalling them; upon no other account, but because it is the Lust and Will of their Enemies it should be so. No, the blessed Lord of all, hath engag'd the Ministry of his Angels for their Protection and Guardianship, that they are said to *pitch their Tents round about those that fear God*, Psal. 34. 7. He hath told us that *they are Ministring Spirits, sent forth to Minister to them who are the heirs of Salvation*, Heb. 1. ult. All which is no mean instance of the Care he hath for, and the Concern he hath with them. But then,

Secondly, it might be further illustrated, from the actual Experiences the Church hath

hath in all Ages had of the Interposures of this Providence in its greatest extremities. This indeed, might run me into an History of the Church, which would far exceed the bounds of the time I now have. I will only observe to you, that both the History of the Scriptures, and other Books of Record handed down to us to this very day, do give us such memorable instances, of strange and unaccountable Deliverances in the near and immediate dangers that have seem'd to threaten an unavoidable Overthrow; that they have Proclaim'd the Finger of God in all; none but ~~Gods kind mercies~~, none but the ever-wakeful Care, none but the Almighty Power could have accomplisht them. This very Church which it hath pleas'd God to Reform and Establish amongst us; what Stories have we to tell, what Footsteps and Impressions hath it pleas'd Divine Providence to leave, even amongst us, of its care and vigilancy, when the enrag'd and implacable Enemies have thought they had laid their Contrivances so deep, that no Eye could have pierc'd to the bottom of them; so strong,

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that

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that no Arm could have broken them; with such precaution and fore-sight, that no length of Time should have weaken'd or defeated them: But (that I may use the Expression of the Apostle) *he hath deliver'd us, and doth deliver, in whom also we trust that he will yet deliver us.* To say the truth, considering that restless and unweary'd Rage and Inveteracy of successive Enemies from one Age to another, the combin'd and confederated interests of the greater part of Mankind, against what may always challenge the name of *a little Flock*; it is no mean instance of Providence that there is such a Community *as his Church* in Being in the World: To see how this tost and weather-beaten Vessel, hath liv'd so many Ages in the midst of a Tempestuous Sea, where she hath sprung many a Leak, lost her Tackle, and frequently been upon the very point of Foundring by meer stress of Weather; the Winds and the Waves in mutual contention which should most effectually contribute to the Shipwrack; what account can be given why she had not been lost before this? but

but the interposure of Providence; who, that he might convince the World, that it is his Hand in all this, hath frequently turn'd what have been the design'd Methods of her ruine, to prove the immediate Occasions of her Salvation and Deliverance: Nay, hath made the very blood of some to become the seed and propagation of others.

Object. And this lays in our way the grand Objection that hath been frequently made, and sometimes by the very best of men; *viz.* Not only that *all things happen alike to all, there is one event to the Righteous, and to the Wicked, &c.* But that frequently it pleaseth God to order it, that the Scenes of the Wicked are all prosperous and gay in this World, whilst those of Good Men, those who are call'd and entituled God's Church and peculiar People, are all cloudy and discouraging; the one seeming to have been made only as Sheep for the others slaughtering. This once almost stagger'd even *David's* Faith, and put the Prophet *Jeremy* upon the arguing point with God. As for me (*saith David*)

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my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipt, for I was envious at the Foolish, when I saw the Prosperity of the Wicked, Ps. 73. 2, 3. Righteous art thou, O Lord (saith Jeremy) when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgements, wherefore doth the way of the Wicked prosper, wherefore are all they happy which deal very treacherously? Jer. 12. 1. As to this we are to Consider,

1. That the Afflictions even of Good Men, are oftentimes the fruits of their own doings. There are many Promises for securing the good man's well-being even in this World, which as they have their several Conditions, so no question would be more illustriously accomplish'd here, did they not themselves by their own follies make them void, and of no effect. Thus their Poverty is sometimes the chastisement of their Pride and Covetousness; their Reproach and Contempt a just Recompence to their own peevishness, severe and affected distances, and the ill usage of other mens good Names. Thus *Prov. 11. ult. Behold the Righteous shall be Recompenced*

penced in the Earth, much more the Ungodly and the Sinner. So that, as to these present Fruits which they reap of their own Follies, it is so far from bringing into Question the Care or Concern of Providence, that it enforces the Argument, and adds to the Demonstration; it shews how careful and vigilant a Father they are Govern'd by, that will by seasonable Chastisements reduce their Wandrings, and by a timely Discipline prevent their undoing themselves. *By this shall the Iniquity of Jacob be purg'd, and this is all the Fruit to take away sin, Isa. 27. 9. Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth, Heb. 12. 6.* The Church it self may at some times need this kind of handling, as the Gold doth the Furnace, a Wound its Corrosives, or a Child the Rod: And it is so far from giving us any reasonable ground to mistrust Providence, while he permits his Church to fall under the severities of its Enemies, that it argues his greater Care, just as it doth the Wisdom and Concern of a Father, when he makes his Child smart under the correction of a Fault. However,

Secondly,

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Secondly, His Providence doth so effectually superintend the Affairs of the Church, that it doth most assuredly overrule in the Events of things, that the Issue shall be good; and this answers the whole Objection, *We know* (saith the Apostle) *that all things shall work together for the good of those that love God,* Rom. 8. 28. This we may depend upon as an undoubted Truth, that all Things without us, Things which we have no Power over, nor can any ways Order or Influence our selves, these certainly, how Dark and Unintelligible, how Contrary and Discouraging soever they may seem at present to us, yet such is the Care and Indulgence of Providence toward all *His*, that they shall conspire together in the End for their real Good; that is, that it shall be really better for us, that such or such were the circumstances of our Lives, than if they had been otherwise, or as we had propounded to our selves. What if we our selves should Dye off in a State of Affliction, and not out-live the Storm, which it may please God to raise in our own Age; yet may our particular
severe

severe Allotments, have some considerable tendency to the well-being of the General, in the present or succeeding Generation? We are not to limit the Issues of Providence to the bounds of our own time, for that may be upon the Wheel now, that may not be wrought off till some Ages hence; and yet what is at this time befalling his Church, may have its immediate conduciveness to that last upshot; and all this, because in the Management of that Infinite Providence, to whom *one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, 2 Pet. 3. 8.* What did all the Rage and Spight against the Primitive Church signifie, (tho' then but a little Flock) but to add to its Numbers, and encrease its Interest in the World? the Innocent Lives and the Heroick Deaths of the first Professors, won upon By-Standers, and oftentimes provok'd them in a Rapture, to leap out of Infidelity into a Blessed Martyrdom; till at length the *Roman* Empire it self, wear'd with its own insignificant Cruelties, submitted to the Religion it had so long pursu'd with Rage and Barbarism. What did all the Severities exercis'd in Queen *Mary's* days

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days prove, but that, as the Banishment of some, issu'd in the Promotion and Enlargement of the *Reform'd* Religion abroad; so did the Exemplary Courage of others in the Flames here, introduce the Universal Profession of it in this Kingdom! which I trust in God will never be rooted out more. Even particular Persons have so far outliv'd their own Sorrows, as to see and own that their Afflictions were the happy Ministries to their real well-being. Thus *David* reflects, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* And it is not conceivable, what an united Song to Providence, the mighty Quire of Happy Souls will be composing in Heaven, when they look back upon all the different passages of their Lives, upon all the mis-judg'd Appearances of this World, which they once Mourn'd and Repin'd under, when they see plainly what a tendency every thing that befell them had, to Qualifie them for that State: It is an excellent Expression, a Good and Learned Man hath, *nemo judicet de operibus dei, ante quintum actum.* It is no good judging of the Plot till the Play be done. It is the last Act that discovers

discovers all the Intricacies, and brings all the odd and surprizing Passages to a pleasing and joyous conclusion. And now, I shall conclude with an useful Reflection or two upon the whole.

1. That we would hence learn to make it some part of our Business in the World, to be observing the Beauties of Providence. It was for this end that God made the World, and for this very end that he still interposes in the Affairs of it, that he might gain from the Rational part of his Creation, those just Revenues of Praise that are due to all the effects of his Wisdom, Goodness, Power, Justice, and Majesty, which he so visibly Multiplies upon us every day. It is an Excellent Reflection which the Moralist (tho' an Heathen) makes, *εἰ γὰρ οὐκ ἔχομεν*, ' *Ec.* If we have our Wits and Reason about us, what would become us more than to praise the Deity, to speak well of him, and to give him thanks. Ought not (saith he) the Gardiner when Digging, and the Husbandman when Plowing his Ground, be still singing this Hymn, *Μέγας ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν*, ' *μετὰ τὸν ἔργον αὐτοῦ δι' ὃν τὴν γῆν ἐργάζονται*, ' *Ec.* great is that God, that hath furnisht us with these Instruments to Till the Ground, that hath

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'supply'd us with these Hands to labour
'out our Food and Support, but most of
'all, that hath endu'd us with Reason to
'Understand and Consider this, *νῦν δὲ λογισθεῖτε,*
'&c. Since then I have Reason, I will praise
'my God as becomes me, *καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν πάντη*
'*ᾄδον μεγαλύνοντες,* and I do exhort you all to join
'Consort with me in the same Song of Praise.
It was worth the Transcribing, to shew how
Noble a Resolution an Heathen could take
up, of Praising his Maker in the Contem-
plation of Providence, a Copy the Chri-
stian need not be asham'd to write after. And
certainly, nothing could be a more de-
lightsom Employment, than to busie our
Minds in comparing things with things,
and tracing the Footsteps of Divine Wis-
dom and Goodness in the various Effects of
differing Causes, and viewing the Beauty
and Harmony that is in all at last. When
this vast Fabrick of the World was first A-
dorn'd and Finish'd from its rude and
mishapen Mass, *then the Morning Stars sang*
together, and all the Sons of God shouted for
joy, Job 38. 7. For all that God had made
was very Good: Let us then be alwaies
bringing up the Chorus, that as all Things he
hath made are Good, so all that he hath since
done

done is Adorable and Praise-worthy; when we consider what Order hath been maintain'd, what great things have been all along brought to pass by hidden and improbable Means, we may justly break out frequently with that of the Psalmist, *the Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoyce, and the multitude of the Isles be glad thereof.*

2. But withal let us especially be careful, so to behave our selves toward Providence, as to Entitle our selves to his Peculiar Care, that he may concern himself to over-rule all things for our Real Good. This Doctrine of Providence hath a twofold prospect. The Light Side of the Cloud opens it self, towards those that have the Conscience of Serving and Fearing God, but the Dark Side of it turns upon them, who provoke him by the perpetual violation of his Law. Such as live Viciously, and in a daily contempt of his Just and Reasonable Commands, as they are sure of the Eye of Providence attending and viewing them, so they may as reasonably expect the weight of his hand in their Punishment. Solomon tells us, *Righteousness exalteth a Nation, but Sin is the reproach of any People,* Pro. 14. 34. There is nothing can put us within the com-

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pass of danger, but the Witness that our own Wickedness may bear against us in the presence of God. It is observable, that tho' *Canaan* had been most Faithfully and Irrevocably promis'd to *Abraham*, yet his Posterity could never dispossess the present Inhabitants, till they *had fill'd up the measures of their sins*, which was 400 Years after that Promise was made. And our Blessed Saviour, tho' he knew the fatal Period appointed for *Jerusalem*, yet he bids them *even fill up the measure of their Fathers*, *Mat. 23. 34.* And this was forty years after they had committed that horrid Wickedness of cutting off their own *Messiah*. God forbid that we should be esteem'd by Providence, as having *fill'd up our measures* yet ! But let me tell you, we live in an Age that seems considerably ripen'd in the Excesses of Wickedness. An Age, wherein the serious part of Religion seems grown so much out of date and fashion, that it becomes hardly worth the while so much as to dissemble it. An Age, wherein men have no reluctancy of shewing the worst side outermost, and the Formalist thinks fit to throw off all his Disguises, when the Atheist can talk boldly, and the Hypocrite looks upon his Visors and Shapes of Reli-

Religion as too demure, and so, rather cross than promote his Interest; when good men themselves grow languid and remis, as to all the true Fervour of Religion, and see it so universally unpractis'd, that they have a kind of Modesty and Restraint upon themselves, as asham'd to appear singular in the warm and devout part which every one Ridicules. O would God, that while the Rod is as yet but shaking over us, and the Cloud but rising that threatens a Storm, we may awake from the Lethargick state that we are in; we may argue our selves into a speedy and Universal Reformation, from whatever Divine Providence hath discern'd amiss in us. That our Prophaneness, contempt of Religion, Intemperance, Pride, Uncleaness, Oppression, rending the Name of God with Oaths and direful Imprecations, neglect of his Worship, mutual Hatred and bitter Animosities &c. may no longer lay us open to the Vengeance of Heaven, that it break not out upon us, and *there be no remedy*. Thanks be to God, a just zeal for *Truth and the simplicity of the Gospel*, hath of late something reviv'd amongst us, the dying Spark hath rekindled, and took new flame from the opposition it hath met with; O that a new Zeal for *the life*
and

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and Practice of that Holy Religion we profess, might revive too; that men would but generally apply themselves to *live* as they profess to *believe*, then might we expect to be the Darlings of Providence, we should quickly then find him bringing Light out of our Darkness, Good out of our Evils, and Order out of all our threatned Confusions.

3. Having taken care by our Universal Repentance and Amendment of Life, to Entitle our selves to the peculiar care of Divine Providence, let us live upon the comforts of this Doctrine, that Providence doth concern it self in the well-being of his Church. Let us trust in God, and *cast all our care upon him who careth for us*. Let us resign our selves to his wise Conduct in all things, in *patience possessing our Souls*, using all the means for our Peace and security that are warrantable and requir'd, leaving the whole Success to him that Governs the World, who will take care of his own Glory, which ought to be our greatest End, and will not fail in the Issue, to make us reap the Fruits of these our humble dependances. *Which God of his Infinite Mercy grant, &c.*

FINIS.